

Gallinger's Guidelines



HJB Counseling and Guidance Program Newsletter

Do you have ANTs in your brain? In counseling we have a saying, “don’t always believe what you think”. ANT is short for Automatic Negative Thought. We all have “ANTs” but it may not be a problem unless it becomes a habit. An “ANT Hill” is one negative thought feeding the creation of a second, and a third, etc. If this is happening it is time to look for a solution. The practice of catching the first ANT and disputing it is one such solution. Last year I had a third grade girl express the thought that her friend didn’t like her anymore, because that friend didn’t pick her to play one day. This was followed by other automatic thoughts like “this is horrible”, “my life is ruined”, “I have no friends”, etc. Disputing the first thought can prevent subsequent thoughts from occurring. So how do you dispute the first ANT? Ask, “Is the thought the truth” and if the mind says “yes”, ask a second question. “Am I 100% sure it is true?” If still believing the ANT, question further. Third, “How do I feel when I have this thought? Fourth, “How would I feel if I didn’t have this thought?” And finally, turn the first thought around and ask if the opposite could be true. What if that person does like me, despite what happened? At this point the girl felt confident within herself to face talking to her friend instead of allowing an “ANT hill” to ruin her day. (adapted from various sources including the writings of Kim Frank, 2007).



Peer mediation at HJB is underway with the first two mediations being carried out by fifth graders Hanna Bird, Jeffrey Waskiewicz, Renee Crump and Jessica Anderson, nice going! These students promoted the program by going around to “morning rooms” of grades second-fourth, introducing themselves and telling students about peer mediation. This month, four more peer mediators will have a chance to both promote and do mediations.

Counseling. Currently the caseload for counseling is at 30 students. The number seen is actually more when including one time self-referrals. If I see a child more than once and want to continue counseling, I try to get a hold of a parent to let them know. Any child who is not opted-out can see me for counseling and can be referred by a parent, administrator, or teacher.

Fifth graders were surveyed and the top five out of ten responses of what they want to learn this year in Guidance are; How to trust others more, how not to feel left out, how to handle anger of others, how to be treated fairly, and career awareness. They are having a lesson on trustworthiness and how good listening skills can help build trust. Look for a green handout on “friendship building” to come home.

Fourth graders are learning about respecting the feelings of others through a program called “You’re Mean!:

When words hurt us". Look for an orange summary sheet to come home about "speaking up" for oneself and what to do "When friends are mistreated".

Third graders continued reviewing friendship and problem solving skills with a video and puppetry. A separate newsletter is being sent home with students, listing the various problem solving skills taught.

Second graders are experiencing the wonders of "Willow Pond" where Kelso the frog puppet lives and acts out a story to solve a problem among the ducks and frogs in a peaceful way.

First Grade continued to learn about "sweet and sour" feelings from "Pickle Pal" puppet and are getting to make their own "pickle sticks" to practice feeling word vocabulary.

Kindergarteners are learning the importance of sharing in a new Willdo and Cando adventure. Tuggles the bear puppet continues to promote peaceable ways for children to learn and play together.

Guidance Groups have started and more will start in October. Parents may inquire about the topics by calling the Guidance Office or dropping in to see the materials used. Topics: Friendship building, Assertiveness, Anger and/or Anxiety management, Making good choices, and Life Changes like divorce in a family or the death of a family member. A parental permission form is required for any child to participate in a group.

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